

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of packaging a rolled article by winding a packaging sheet having skirt members on respective opposite side edges thereof around the rolled article which has a rolled elongate sheet with end packaging members attached respectively to opposite sides thereof, comprising the steps of:

gripping a side edge of said packaging sheet and feeding the packaging sheet ~~from the side edge thereof~~ to a winding position to position the packaging sheet in the winding position;

positioning said rolled article with respect to said packaging sheet in said winding position;

attaching an end of said packaging sheet to an end of said elongate sheet of said rolled article;

rotating said rolled article while gripping an opposite ~~winding~~ end of said packaging sheet to wind said packaging sheet around said rolled article; and

mounting said skirt members on said end packaging members while pressing the end packaging members against respective opposite ends of said rolled article.

2. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of: displacing the gripped opposite ~~winding~~ end of said packaging sheet toward said rolled article in synchronism with the rotation of said rolled article.

3. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of: pressing said packaging sheet against said rolled article by rollers, and

after said packaging sheet is pressed against said rolled article by rollers, releasing the ~~opposite-winding~~ end of said packaging sheet, and winding said packaging sheet around said rolled article.

4. (currently amended): An apparatus for packaging a rolled article by winding a packaging sheet having skirt members on respective opposite side edges thereof around the rolled article which has a rolled elongate sheet with end packaging members attached respectively to opposite sides thereof, comprising:

a packaging sheet feed mechanism for gripping a side edge of said packaging sheet and feeding the packaging sheet ~~from the side edge thereof~~ to a winding position to position the packaging sheet in the winding position;

a rotating and supporting mechanism for positioning said rolled article with respect to said packaging sheet in said winding position, and rotating said rolled article;

an attaching mechanism for attaching an end of said packaging sheet to an end of said elongate sheet of said rolled article;

a packaging sheet holding mechanism for gripping an ~~opposite-winding~~ end of said packaging sheet and moving the packaging sheet toward said rolled article when said rolled article is rotated;

a pressing mechanism for pressing the end packaging members against respective opposite ends of said rolled article; and

a skirt installing mechanism for installing said skirt members on said end packaging members.

5. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said packaging sheet feed mechanism comprises:

clamp means for gripping the side edge of said packaging sheet; and

moving means for moving said clamp means to said winding position.

6. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said rotating and supporting mechanism comprises:

a pair of engaging means for engaging the opposite ends of said rolled article;

displacing means for moving said engaging means symmetrically toward and away from each other; and

rotating means for rotating said rolled article through said engaging means.

7. (original): An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said pressing mechanism is displaceable in unison with said engaging means by said displacing means.

8. (original): An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said skirt installing mechanism is displaceable in unison with said engaging means by said displacing means.

9. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said attaching mechanism comprises:

positioning and holding means for positioning and holding the end of said elongate sheet; and

pressing means for pressing the end of said packaging sheet against the end of said elongate sheet positioned and held by said positioning and holding means, with a joint means interposed therebetween.

10. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

rollers for pressing said packaging sheet against said rolled article.

11. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said skirt members are made of a shrink material which is shrinkable when heated, and said skirt installing mechanism comprises heating means for shrinking and installing said skirt members on said end packaging members.